

10-2008

## Information Outlook, October 2008

Special Libraries Association

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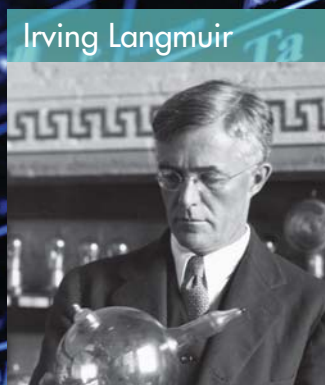
THE MAGAZINE OF THE SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION



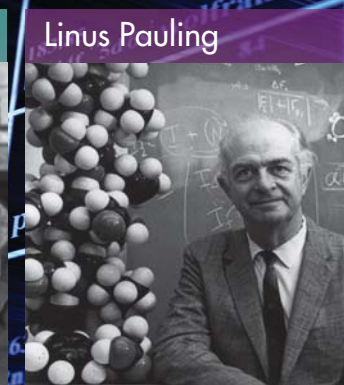
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INFO PROS AS TELECOMMUTERS

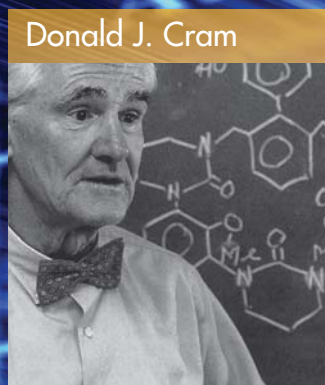
# A Legacy of Excellence



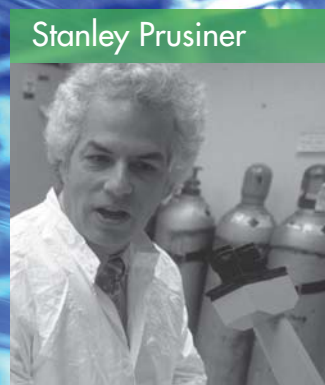
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\*\*Chemical Abstracts places abstracts in these categories based on their main content and interest.

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION



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## SAVE THE DATE

### 14 – 17 June 2009

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# We Have the Resources for Your Global Workplace

SLA's units, annual conference and virtual communities make it simple for you to stay in touch with colleagues who share your interests

BY JANICE R. LACHANCE, CEO



The workplace of the information pro in 1909 consisted of stacks of books, drawers of cards and lots of walls. What passed for high technology was a rolling ladder that reached the top shelf. Information exchange took place in person or by the mails, and professional development was a haphazard affair.

It was because sharing information was such a formidable challenge that the Special Libraries Association was established. The first edition of *Special Libraries* called for librarians to share bibliographies they compiled and noted that "there is no effective method in operation by which each library is kept in touch with the work being done by other special libraries."

Today, you as information professionals have a world of information at your fingertips. Sadly, not all of that information is valid or useful—perhaps not even the data your organizations are using to make critical decisions. You play an important role in mediating between users and content, positioning your organization for better decision making.

The options for dissemination increase by the day, but your work day can not expand at the same rate. Information professionals must work smart. To do that, you have to be connected with others—to learn, to collaborate and even at times to commiserate. As much as your profession has changed since 1909, the need and desire to stay in touch with your colleagues has not wavered. It has only expanded from local to global.

Our units (chapters, divisions and caucuses), annual conference and

virtual communities make it simple for you to stay in touch with colleagues who share your interests—whether they are across the country or on the other side of the world. As an SLA member, you also qualify for discounted registration at conferences held by a number of our partner organizations. I recently attended the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress in Québec, where I welcomed 34 new members to SLA. President Stephen Abram presented at four sessions, showcasing some of the resources SLA offers to keep you ahead of the information curve.

Today's technology means that a flood of facts finds its way around every political and natural boundary thrown in its path. The people you serve are trying to keep from drowning in a sea of information, and they are relying on you to navigate for them.

Your clients need the right information, they need it right now—and it must arrive in the way that works best for them. Your first-class passengers' expectations and preferences are changing. A recent study conducted by Outsell shows that 80 percent of executives use wireless handheld devices. Are you sending them critical information in a format compatible with those devices? Executives also are more likely to use the Internet as their first choice for information—65 percent of them, compared with 52 percent of other workers.

To be successful in this environment, you will sometimes have to travel outside of your comfort zone. In

fact, the most perilous place to be on today's information highway is standing still. Just remember that you have plenty of companions on this journey.

Unlike the information professional of 1909, you do not have to go it alone—because you have got connections. Specifically, you have SLA, a global network that will help you keep your bearings and chart your route, avoiding learning obstacles and getting straight to your information destination.

Mystified about Web 2.0 and how it can help you do your job better? Learn painlessly at the SLA Innovation Laboratory, where even the technology-timid can get up to date. Then hop onboard Gary Price's Research Tool Box, a quarterly tour of the latest tools, trends and resources available on the Internet, at Click U.

While you are there, check out our exclusive certificate programs in Competitive Intelligence, Knowledge Management and Copyright Management. You also have access to special courses, member discounts on learning opportunities with many of our partner organizations, access to the Membership & Leadership Library and more.

For today's information professional, learning is not a day excursion; it is a lifelong expedition. Every day brings something new and rewarding. Best of all, most of it resides right on your desktop, bringing a world of information straight to you. **SLA**

*Janice R. Lachance*



## Transition to eBooks Fastest in Research Areas

**New survey by Springer finds that eBooks are best suited to specific research and information retrieval purposes.**

While eBooks will not replace print books in the near future, users are rapidly adopting them as complementary to print books, according to a newly released survey conducted by Springer in conjunction with five leading academic institutions. Users expect that the transition to eBooks will happen fastest for research-related activities, rather than study, teaching or leisure purposes. They also expect that reference works will most quickly make the transition to eBooks, followed by research monographs and textbooks.

The university libraries that participated in the survey were: the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; the University of Turku, Finland; the Centre for Mathematics and Computer Science (CWI) Amsterdam, the Netherlands; the University of Muenster, Germany; and the JRD Tata Memorial Library, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India.

The survey's findings further support the conclusion that eBooks are best suited to specific research and information retrieval purposes. Users recognize the potential of eBooks to support their research activities and believe that digitized reference works will help them quickly locate the specific information they seek.

Most respondents predicted that in five years time they will prefer to read print versions of some books and electronic versions of others. For example, at the University of Muenster, 53 percent of respondents said they would read both print and eBooks, 35 percent said they would read more print, and seven percent said they would

read more eBooks. In the short term, eBooks will continue to be best suited to specific research and information retrieval needs.

Focusing on some of the perceived advantages of eBooks, the survey cited the ability to gain 24/7 access for multiple users, convenient full-text searchability and easy access to information. However, difficulty of reading books from a screen and preference for traditional print books were cited as the primary disadvantages.

The emergence of eBooks as a central part of the information experience requires libraries to think differently about how to meet the needs of their users, the survey noted, adding that libraries can expand eBook usage to an even larger population of users by raising awareness of eBook availability and ensuring that eBook content is easy to find and use. It pointed out that viewing eBooks through the lens of traditional print book usage might cause libraries to miss important opportunities for enhancing the user research experience.

"Mostly the advantage of using eBooks would be their convenience," said a user at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "Instead of going through the hassle of tracking down a specific work and checking it out, eBooks provide me with easy access to the information I need at my own convenience and leisure."

Added Olaf Ernst, President eProduct Management & Innovation,

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Springer: "The survey results show that eBooks are best suited for research purposes or in a search environment. eBooks have the potential to stimulate new forms of book content usage. The feedback provided in this survey can help us accommodate their needs as their eBook collections grow."

Additionally, the survey found that users most frequently locate eBooks through general search engines like

Google as well as through online library catalogs.

Springer is the world's second largest journal publisher in the STM (Science, Technology, Medicine) sector and the largest supplier of STM books. The full-text PDF of the survey's white paper, "eBooks – The End User Perspective," can be found at: [www.springer.com/ebooks](http://www.springer.com/ebooks). **SLA**

## U.S. Workers Have Love-Hate Relationship with Technology

A new national survey by the Pew Research Center reveals that 62 percent of adults who are currently employed use the Internet or email at work and they have mixed views about the impact of technology on their work lives. On the one hand, they cite the benefits of increased connectivity and flexibility that the Internet and all of their various gadgets afford them at work. On the other hand, many workers say these tools have added stress and new demands to their lives.

"American workers have a love-hate relationship with technology," said Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialist with the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project and co-author of the report. "Along with the benefits of increased connectivity comes a host of new issues into workers' lives. How do you strike a work-life balance when you are always reachable by the boss? What counts as overtime work when you are 'on the clock' at all hours? How much personal online browsing can you do while you are sitting in your cubicle? These challenges pervade many workplaces today."

The survey found that workplace Internet users tend to either use the Internet every day or not at all. A large majority of the population can be found at either end of the spectrum—using the Internet at work every day (60 percent) or never (28 percent). By con-

trast, few (5 percent) use the Internet just once every few days at work and only 6 percent use it occasionally.

Among company types, government workers—federal, state or local—are the most likely to use the Internet at work, with 72 percent of government workers using the Internet at least several times a day at work. Those who work in schools and educational institutions are also frequent Internet users at work, followed closely by those who work in nonprofits, according to the Pew survey.

Not surprisingly, shopping is among the most popular online leisure activities at work, with 22 percent of employed Internet users reporting at least some at-work purchasing. But the survey found that just 2 percent of employed Internet users blog at work. Working men and women are equally as likely to blog, but young adults far outpace older workers in their engagement with blogging. Internet users in the 18-29 age range are more than twice as likely to blog when compared with 30-49 year olds (20 percent vs. 9 percent). Blog reading is also most prevalent among younger generations of employed Internet users. One in three Internet-using employees (33 percent) said they have read someone else's blog or online journal. For the full report please visit: [www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/264/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/264/report_display.asp). **SLA**

## Info File

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# SLA Family of Blogs Gets New Addition

Information Center Connections has members' information needs in mind, using member inquiries and info industry buzz to shape the blogs.

BY CAROLYN J. SOSNOWSKI, MLIS

**Information Center Connections**  
[http://slaconnections.typepad.com/info\\_center\\_blog/](http://slaconnections.typepad.com/info_center_blog/)

Have you been reading the new Connections blogs? Several months ago, SLA transformed its e-newsletters into blogs, plus a weekly e-mail of recent posts. (Find them all at [www.sla.org/connections/](http://www.sla.org/connections/).) The latest addition to the SLA blog family is Information Center Connections. We've created it with members' information needs in mind, using member inquiries and info industry buzz to shape what we write. Our posts so far have touched on information overload, information center value, and customer service. We'll also point readers to interesting articles and cool Web sites we've found. Please add your comments—we'd love to hear from you.



**MakeUseOf.com**  
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A Danish graduate student created this site to share useful (not necessarily new) tech tools with readers. Now, there are several contributors bringing tips and apps to the MakeUseOf.com

blog and directory. You can subscribe to one or both, or just browse the lists of recommended tools or the most popular posts when you're looking for a solution to a problem or want to learn more about, for example, photo tools, mobile calendars, mashups, file sharing or data applications.

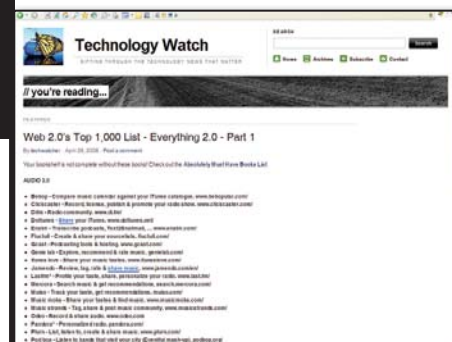


**Musings on the Diffusion of Emerging Technologies**

<http://supertechgirl.blogspot.com/>

A new blog from Cybele Werts that reports her attempts to stay current (and beyond) with technology. Werts has written for *Information Outlook* about her experiences with podcasting, knowledge management applications, and communities of practice,

and "Musings" takes off from there. Early posts focus on her participation in SLA's 23 Things project (<http://wiki.sla.org/display/23Things>), a self-paced exploration of Web 2.0 tools. Maybe you'll learn something and be inspired to try a few new things yourself.

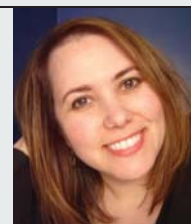


**Web 2.0's Top 1,000 List**

<http://techwatch.reviewk.com/2008/04/web-20s-top-1000-list-2/>

This massive list (in three parts) of tools and applications from Technology Watch will keep you busy for, oh, months. I've covered some of these sites in this column, but I think the vast majority would be new to you. Neatly organized in categories, here are some of the tools that are covered: audio, calendars, e-commerce, file sharing, images and imaging, knowledge sharing, mapping, news, portals, project management, RSS, search, software, video, and word processing. In the spirit of 23 Things (see above), take a few of these out for a spin or two. You'll probably find several that you can implement for your own use or in your information center. **SLA**

**CAROLYN J. SOSNOWSKI, MLIS**, is SLA's information specialist. She has 10 years of experience in libraries, including more than four years in SLA's Information Center. She can be reached at [csosnowski@sla.org](mailto:csosnowski@sla.org).







# The Successful Workplace: Our Shared Responsibility

WHEN A WORKPLACE “WORKS” IT IS NO ACCIDENT. DELIBERATE AND CONSTANT CARE IS REQUIRED TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN THE KIND OF ENVIRONMENT THAT HAS EMPLOYEES LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING TO WORK

BY ULLA DE STRICKER

**T**hrough more than three decades in the profession, I have naturally come across many a challenge and opportunity and learned valuable lessons from each. Those standing out most in my mind are associated not with any technical aspect of our domain, but with people. To this day, I am thankful to long-ago colleagues for the learning and growth opportunities they afforded me, and I continue to learn from colleagues and clients. I am grateful for the opportunities I now have for speaking about the skills that make for a successful career and the characteristics that make for a successful workplace.

When a workplace “works” it is no accident. Deliberate and constant care is required to create and sustain the kind of environment that has employees looking forward to getting to work. Fortunately, the characteristics and behaviors that make for a positive workplace are not esoteric—the golden

rule and common sense are the major ingredients (to no one’s surprise, I hope). Any casual visit to Amazon.com will reveal a cornucopia of resources dealing with the overall topic of getting along with others and being a productive team member at work.

Ah, I hear you think: But isn’t the special library a unique environment calling for specialized approaches to a good atmosphere? It’s a good question. My answer is that special libraries—and other libraries in their own way—in several ways exhibit characteristics that set them apart from other “intellectual” workplaces:

- Many special libraries occupy an exposed position so that attention needs to be focused outward as well as inward. It is one thing to nurture a positive mood in a department that enjoys the enthusiastic support of the organization’s senior management and a rock-solid budget with regular increases ... it is quite another to pull the feat off in one that is at constant

risk of downsizing or outright closure.

- Even in relatively secure settings, it is not sufficient to focus on the technical specifics of the job. Every activity and interaction with clients and stakeholders needs to be infused with an element communicating the value message and engaging the recipient in further dialogue so as to sustain the ongoing process of learning about stakeholder priorities. Such an extra angle to every function adds complexity.
- The special library may be perceived as separate from the “real business” of the organization, hence there is potential for a sense of isolation on the part of library staff.
- The nature of the work done in a special library is often intense (tight deadlines come to mind as one reason), and the subject matter in question may be quite complex, rendering research work demanding. The sense of pressure and stress may be pronounced.



- Given that the subspecialty of managing special libraries may have been covered in one course taken long ago, it is not uncommon for those in special libraries to find themselves in leadership roles they don't feel fully prepared for. Wondering whether one is "doing it right" adds significantly to the stress level.

However, those special characteristics do not prevent us from learning the lessons in the management books. The trick is to adapt what we read to the unique mix of roles and personalities in *our* special library setting.

## The Foundation

In the segment on personal competencies within the Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century (Revised edition, June 2003), the special librarian is pictured as doing two important things:

**1. Builds an environment of mutual respect and trust; respects and values diversity. This means a workplace where everyone:**

- Treats others with respect and values diversity.
- Knows the strengths of each person and the complementary strengths of others.

- Delivers on time and on target and expects others to do the same.
- Creates a problem-solving environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and acknowledged, and helps others optimize their contribution.
- Advocates for a work environment that encourages and supports ongoing knowledge development and that values the contribution of people.

**2. Employs a team approach; recognizes the balance of collaborating, leading and following. This means a workplace where everyone:**

- Works as part of the team regardless of his/her position or level.
- Develops and uses leadership and collaboration skills.
- Keeps abreast of trends in leadership skills and styles, using this knowledge to help self and others develop the most effective and appropriate approaches in different contexts.
- Mentors other team members and asks for mentoring from others when it is needed.

Building on those points, I would like to add: The magic of a supportive workplace that staff members love to work in consists of nothing more unusual than what I call "bringing our human-

ity to work." If *every team member, regardless of role*, keeps the wellbeing of colleagues front and center every day ... the rest is straightforward. We are unlikely to find job descriptions featuring mentions of compassion, but it is worth considering. To me, it is reasonable to ask that everyone show compassion in the course of day-to-day work.

I hasten to say that I am not advocating any kind of inappropriate venture into group therapy or meddling in colleagues' personal affairs. I *am* advocating interest in and caring for colleagues so that their experience of coming to work can be as positive as possible—and that is entirely doable well within the boundaries of decorum and professional demeanor.

## Fostering a Positive Atmosphere

It is true that a leader's actions, explicit communication, and implicit messages have tremendous impact on the mood of the workplace, but *everyone* must contribute. It is a mistake for any team member to believe he or she is exempt from the responsibility for creating and maintaining a good environment.

I am convinced that no action, no exchange, and no gesture is too small to



## Any casual visit to Amazon.com will reveal a cornucopia of resources dealing with the overall topic of getting along with others and being a productive team member at work

play a role in how the mood of the workplace is experienced. The sum total of all the seemingly small individual moments is what makes up the “feel” of an environment. Thoughtfulness, willingness to think about how something might appear to others, and plain old courtesy, consideration and friendliness are a good beginning.

Three fundamental principles are key to understanding the dynamics of a workplace:

### 1. CULTURE MATTERS

The answer to the question “What’s it like to work here?” will reveal a great deal about a workplace’s culture. Workplace culture is an outcome of

many elements: The type and frequency of feedback and recognition staff members receive; the scope of permitted experimentation and innovation; tolerance for learning curves; the quality of communication among team members; the level of trust among individuals; and so on. A positive culture plays a significant role in fostering the creativity and innovation so critical in these days of rapid change (for example, adjusting to new tools).

Leaders and team members who actively reward healthy behaviors are in a position to influence culture in more powerful ways than they might believe. Of course, when interaction is virtual there is a special challenge: How

does one “look” friendly and interested within the barren confines of an email or wiki post?

### 2. ATTITUDE AND BELIEFS ARE PARAMOUNT

We may not be able to control events, but we are in a position to choose how we react. Before saying or doing anything, it’s wise to consider how we will look back on it later—with pride or with a cringe? Similarly, an individual’s disposition and overall personality may be relatively unalterable, but he or she can choose how to behave and how to treat colleagues.

An individual’s “work attitude” is the standard operating approach he or she brings to bear on the situations arising in the workplace: “Hm, let’s see, how can we best use this unexpected opportunity to reach out to more stakeholders?” or “Ouch, that was an unfortunate setback, but how can we learn and apply the lesson for the future?” are positive workplace attitudes.

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In an analogous way, an individual's belief system about work colors all behavior—and the experience of his or her colleagues. There can be significant impact from the positive energy of someone who consciously thinks, "I am here to make a meaningful contribution and I give it everything I have; I look for ways to help the department over and above the job description; I am delighted and grateful to have the opportunity to learn and grow as I tackle the job each day; I look for ways to be a good influence on the way everyone experiences working here."

### 3. ATTITUDE AND BELIEFS DRIVE TEAM DYNAMICS

Even in special libraries with highly specialized unique roles, the staff members are a team, working together to deliver the mission. Regardless whether we are members of project focused or permanent teams, we benefit from asking, on a regular basis, questions about our own roles: "Am I doing my share? Could I volunteer something that would help the team's work along? How can I work actively to help other team members deliver their best work?"

Similarly, it is helpful to be tolerant and to recognize that people are human and cannot help bringing to the workplace some personal baggage. (However, tolerance of untoward behavior is of course not recommended!) It takes little effort to bring "flowers" to work and openly appreciate what someone has done, by saying things like: "I really admired the way you stepped up to bat during the meeting." "Where did you learn that ... I'm impressed!"

"Please be aware it is not lost on us how much extra work you are doing to help the project succeed; it is greatly appreciated."

When flowers aren't appropriate, there's always the option of bringing "Dr. Phil" to work, instead of ruminating privately. I call that "hmming instead of fuming." If things aren't ideal, it could be a good idea to ask, for example, "Hm, could it be that the curt response I received has something to do with how much pain she's in?" "Hm, had you considered that the new system is truly daunting and that everyone needs more time to learn it?" "You seem pre-occupied lately; is there anything we should know so we can take it into consideration during the project?" "Were you aware that your extreme energy and direct, enthusiastic manner could come across to quieter types as ... um, a tad intimidating?" (Yes, I have had this last comment made to me!)

A positive attitude is free for the taking—and it costs nothing to share it with others. Isn't that a great bargain?

### What if You Were the Boss?

From my own experience, and from what I hear whenever the conversation turns to the art of management, it's a common experience for "the boss" to lose sleep over the responsibility. Through the years, I gathered up examples of behaviors I observed when watching good leaders at work. These characteristic behaviors are easy to forget in the rush of daily pressure, but when acted out, they have a lot of impact. In my view, we can tell a good leader by how he or she:

- Gives clear charges, and then lets the team work its magic.
- Is available for consultation at any time but avoids micromanaging.
- Appears "on the floor" to ensure awareness of day-to-day reality and to offer opportunities for staff members to mention things they believe don't warrant an appointment.
- Carefully observes each staff member to look for signs of the need for "a chat" or any practical intervention.
- Welcomes strange new ideas, and makes it a desirable and a pleasant experience for staff members to offer suggestions, regardless of whether any given idea succeeds or falls flat.
- Offers detailed feedback, especially if, for example, a proposal wasn't accepted higher up in the chain, to reinforce that input is taken seriously even if it did not have the desired outcome. (We value being heard more than getting our way!)
- Keeps the troops in the loop as to the directions of the organization and the potential impact.
- Is not afraid to say "I don't have the answer."
- Stands up for what is right, and for the staff, and does not shy away from dealing with sticky situations or less-than-positive behaviors.
- Takes a genuine interest in each staff member's experience of the workplace and asks, "What else could be changed to make you feel happy about working here?"

There are many more items in this list, but I'll encapsulate: An accomplished leader is someone who has earned the trust and respect of the individuals for whom he or she is responsible.

In conclusion, is there a "code word" we could pack in our briefcases or backpacks as we head to work? There is: Be yourself, and make sure that "self" is someone whose actions make you proud! **SLA**



**ULLA DE STRICKER**, immediate Past Chair of SLA's Leadership and Management Division, is a Toronto-based consultant specializing in strategies for information and knowledge management. She speaks regularly about career skills and workplace related matters and contributes responses to the "Dear Ulla" blog entries on LMD's Web site ([http://sla-divisions.typepad.com/sla\\_lmd/](http://sla-divisions.typepad.com/sla_lmd/)). Her book, *Business Cases for Info Pros: Here's Why, Here's How*, was published by Information Today in June 2008.

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# Going Green: Info Pros as Telecommuters

IN TIMES WHEN RESOURCES ARE TIGHT, BEING CREATIVE AND RESOURCEFUL CAN BE YOUR TICKET TO AN ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULE—WITH THE ADDED BONUS OF BEING KIND TO THE ENVIRONMENT

BY CHRISTINA STOLL

**I**n February 2008, a study reported that 50 percent of commuters stated that their commutes are getting worse.<sup>1</sup> In June 2008, a report found that 44 percent of 539 surveyed workers in the United States said that higher gas prices have impacted their commutes, compared to 34 percent in 2006.<sup>2</sup> Further, while 60 percent of American workers stated that they would like to have remote work options, only 18 percent do.<sup>3</sup>

Have you inquired if an alternative work schedule is an option for you as a library worker? Have you even considered telecommuting as something you could do as a librarian?

Considering the benefits to library employees, employers and the environment, the library profession should be practicing alternative work schedules. The key is selling telecommuting to your organization as a benefit to it, while reassuring it of your work quality,

and then realistically following through on telecommuting successfully as a library worker.

Library professionals may still not think that telecommuting would fit into their type of work. Yet, libraries increasingly cater to library users outside of the library, adding services that their users can access from home, work or school. If library patrons can access library resources virtually, if students can use the library remotely, then why can't librarians work remotely?

In any profession there is work that may not be conducive to telecommuting, but there are several types of library work ideal for telecommuting. I've worked with a reference librarian in a public library who did her virtual reference work from home. The ordering of books and materials, updating records, and even Web site development—all of which falls within library work—can be done outside of the physical library space.

Looking at professions similar to

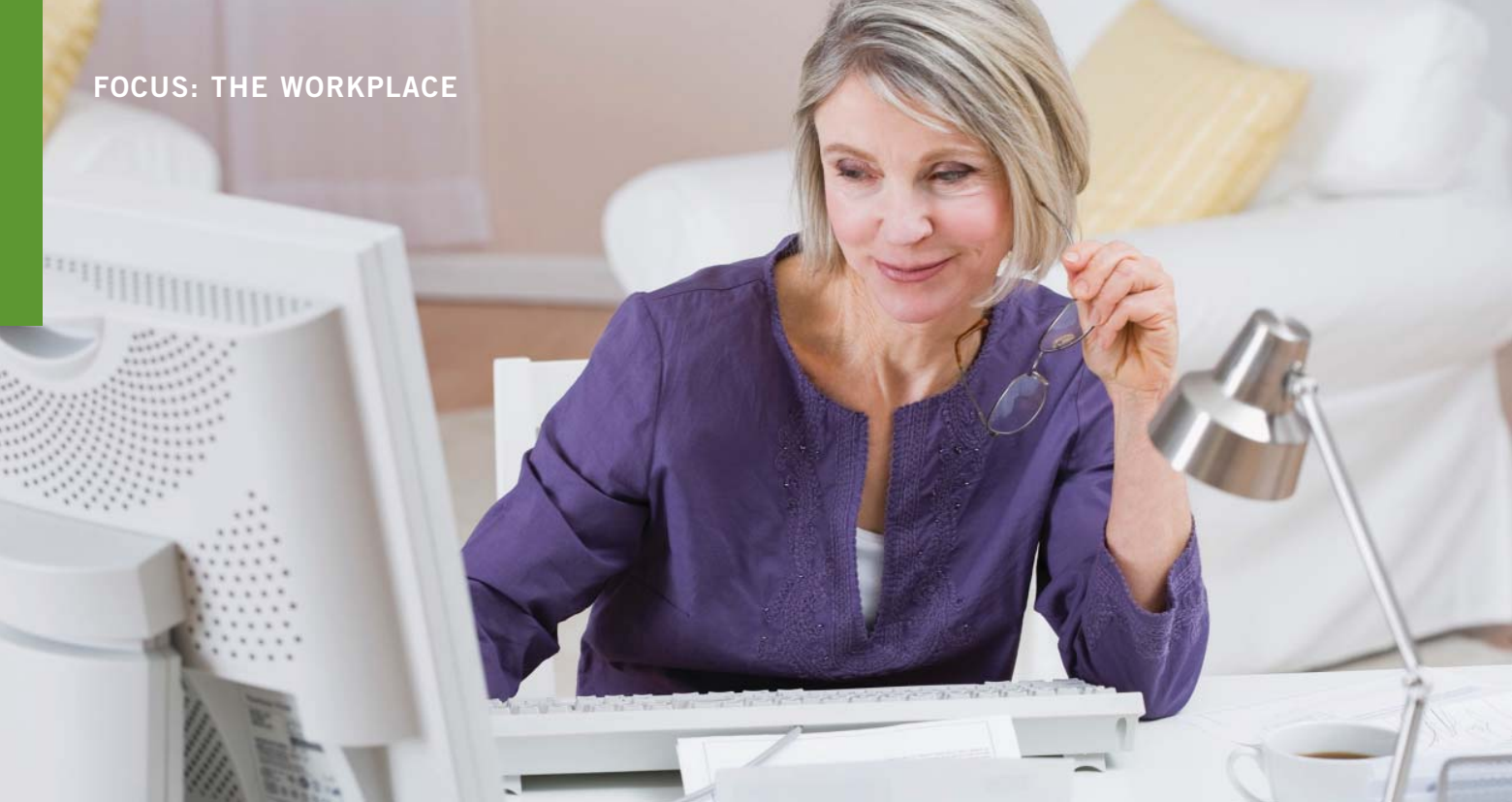
library work, we can find success with telecommuting. Recently in the news, it's been reported that several state governments are trying to mandate a four-day work week to reduce costs and be more environmentally conscious. Even traditional service organizations offer telecommuting to their employees. In the hotel industry, almost 30 percent of Marriott Worldwide's 600 reservation agents work from home, as do 5 to 10 percent of the employees of Carlson Hotels.<sup>4</sup>

## Help from Technology

Technology plays a significant role in enabling employees to work remotely. Libraries are very committed to supporting the cutting-edge technologies that their customers require, and, from my own experience, library staffs tend to have the coolest tools and be aware of the newest technologies. I feel this gives librarians an advantage in that







we can use these tools not only to provide service to our customers from anywhere, but we ourselves can work from anywhere.

Video-conferencing software, social networking sites such as LinkedIn, or the free Internet-telephone service Skype can keep a librarian connected to colleagues and patrons from just about anywhere. Laptops, cell phones and PDA devices, in combination with Internet standard protocols like IMPA and POP3, allow library staff to access their e-mail as if they were sitting at their office computer. My own colleagues and the library staff I serve use instant messaging in addition to e-mail and the phone to keep in touch.

In libraries, as in any profession, there is the reality that working an alternative schedule is not for everyone. Certain job responsibilities may require you to be physically present in your library during normal working hours.

I've also had co-workers tell me that they just wouldn't have the discipline to stay on task if not in the office. It is true that working externally is not always as convenient as having your files and documents within an arm's reach or your co-workers an office away.

Even so, you still have to consider the benefits that telecommuting can bring to library employees and the library, in addition to the hidden impact to the world we live and work in.

My employer, the Metropolitan Library System ([www.mls.lib.il.us](http://www.mls.lib.il.us)), is a membership-based organization serving academic, public, school, and special libraries in downtown Chicago and its southwest suburbs. As a library services consultant, my work involves tending to the needs of the library staff in the 1,500 individual libraries we serve. My work requires me to be where my members need me, be it in one of our two offices (either downtown

or in the suburbs) or visiting a member library. The ability to do my job from anywhere is a given, thus telecommuting fits naturally into my work.

### Reducing Energy Use

On average, I work outside of the office at least half to one day a week. This saves me 50 miles by car a day or 2,600 miles a year on average. With gasoline at \$4.00 a gallon, this adds up to nice savings. It also means that my office lights are kept off. The cost savings to employers who offer telecommuting as a benefit can be as much of as a 40 percent reduction in operating costs per employee.<sup>5</sup>

A study done by the Consumer Electronics Association ([www.ce.org](http://www.ce.org)) in 2007 found that the estimated 3.9 million telecommuters in the United States reduce gasoline consumption by about 840 million gallons a year, while curbing carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 14 million tons. The study, which focused on workers who spend one or more days working from home each week, also found that "just one day of telecommuting saves the equivalent of 1.4 gallons of gasoline and reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 17 to 23 kilograms per day."

**Video-conferencing software, social networking sites such as LinkedIn, or the free Internet-telephone service Skype can keep a librarian connected to colleagues and patrons from just about anywhere.**

Telecommuting can also reduce road congestion and overcrowding on public transportation. Living and working in a large metropolitan area, I take the train downtown, which saves me time and money. But I have noticed that with the rise of gas prices there is a significant increase in the number of fellow passengers.

There are clear benefits with telecommuting as a library worker and contributor to a cleaner environment. So, how do you go about convincing your organization?

### Getting Telecommuting Approved

Before you can start working an alternative schedule, submit a formal proposal to your supervisor or human resources personnel. Here are a few key points to keep in mind when creating your proposal:

- Have a clear reason why you want to telecommute.
- Show how an alternative schedule ties into your job duties. Pick the components of your job that will benefit the most from working outside of the office.
- Highlight work that will benefit from being away from the office, such as:
  - Professional Reading: I use my hour-long train ride into the city to catch up on my professional publications.
  - Writing grants, professional submissions, blog posts: As one of the editors for my organization's electronic newsletter, my telecommuting time is ideal for writing.
  - Phone calls: Another component of my job is to contact speakers and trainers, and doing this outside of the office gives me the quiet time needed to get those calls done.
  - Project Management or Research.
- If your organization has a mission or vision that supports staff professional development, show how telecommuting will support you as a staff member.
- Be sure to include in your proposal

how you will stay connected to your boss, co-workers, and customers.

Your proposal may not always be successful. The first telecommuting proposal I ever wrote was turned down. It eventually was approved when there was a physical shortage of offices. I was offered a temporary smaller work space, and I negotiated to work from home two afternoons a week as a compromise. While the smaller office wasn't permanent, my success at telecommuting was such that I was able to keep my flexible schedule, even after moving to a much bigger office.

If your proposal is not received positively, here's another tip: try suggesting that it undergo a trial period, with a review at the end to determine whether it should be made permanent or not.

The proper time to bring up telecommuting with your employer is something to consider as well. When monetary rewards cannot be offered, think of

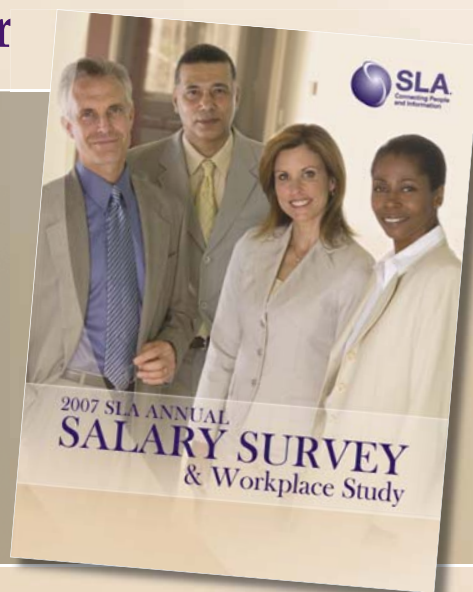
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telecommuting as an alternative benefit in your negotiations. You can also bring up a telecommuting or a flexible work schedule when applying for a new job, if the salary or benefits are not what you desire, or during your performance review when asked if there's a better way the library or your boss can support you as a staff member. Stress how telecommuting will allow you to be a happier, more productive employee. As reported in an article by *Workforce Management* "telecommuters are often more productive than office-bound employees doing the same work."<sup>6</sup>

### Making It Work

Once you've been given the green light to telecommute, you now have to work at it. Having held two library positions with an alternative work schedule, here are my tips for working successfully while telecommuting:

- Set a schedule. Try to work externally the same day or hours each week. Discuss with your boss and co-workers before starting when the best time is for you to be out of the office.
- The work comes first. Be flexible: you will have to come in for certain meetings or responsibilities.
- Set aside work best suited for your telecommuting day.

What you will need to work outside of your library? Here are the basics:

- A phone: Be willing to give up your home or cell phone number to co-workers and customers. Some organizations' internal phone systems will allow their employees to forward their work phone to an outside number.
- Computer and Internet access: If your

job involves being connected online, you have to be connected online outside of the office, and you'll need a computer equipped to do the same type of work you perform in the office. My work computer is a laptop, allowing me to take my desktop with me.

- Dedicated work space: You need an office away from the office. This can be a den, a second bedroom, your basement. I personally like my kitchen table, for it's closest to the phone, provides the best work space, and offers great natural light.

### Staying On Task ... and Connected

It's important to stay on task. That means that you should plan out your day like you would at work. Set goals to accomplish. Also, set up your day depending on your work style—are you a morning person or do you work better in the afternoon? Depending on your style, either get the hard tasks done first, or do the easy tasks first.

While it's a good thing to remove distractions, don't forget to take the same breaks you would if in the office. Getting away from the work, no matter where you are working, will revitalize you.

Most importantly, working outside of the office means staying connected and being available to your co-workers. It should be as if you are in the office next door. I've actually had co-workers whom I've worked with all day comment later that they thought I was in the building. Use technology to stay connected: e-mail is great, instant messaging is even better—and, when in doubt, pick up the phone.

It's also a good idea to sit down with

your boss, and come up with a plan for staying in touch. Does he/her want a weekly report or a daily phone call? Leave messages so that people know where you are. I communicate my schedule via my e-mail, and internally we have an In/Out board on our staff intranet.

Finally, be realistic and honest with your limitations. If after trying to work outside of the library isn't what you expected, don't be afraid to go back into the library.

Telecommuting can be a win-win for everyone in the end. It's a way for both individuals and organizations, including library workers and libraries, to contribute to being greener and smarter about how they use resources. **SLA**

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>TransitCenter, "The Impact of Commuting on Employees; How Commuter Benefits Can Help," Business Week (2008).

<sup>2</sup>Ann Bednarz, "Gas Prices Alter Work Environment," (2008), <http://www.network-world.com/news/2008/060208-gas-prices-work-environment.html>

<sup>3</sup>John Sullivan, "Time to Telecommute," Workforce Management (2008).

<sup>4</sup>Virgil Larson, "High Gas Prices Mean Commuters Are Trying To Save Time and Money," Omaha World-Herald (NE) 2008.

<sup>5</sup>Jessica Marquez, "Firms Offering Telecommuting to Cut Spending on Real Estate," Workforce Management, 87 (2008).

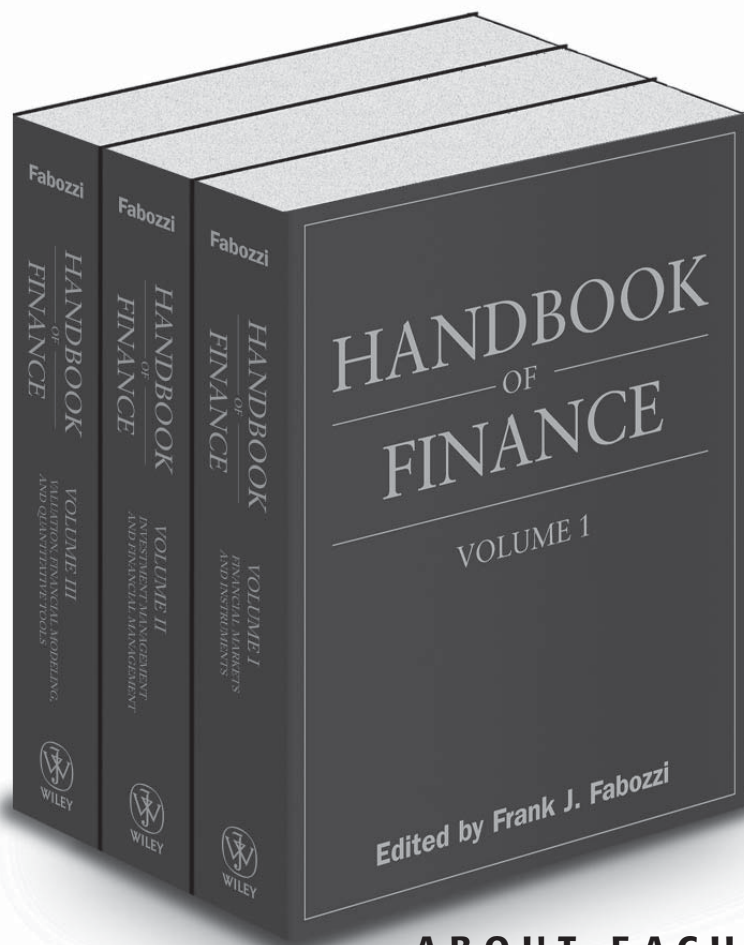
<sup>6</sup>John Sullivan, "Time to Telecommute," Workforce Management 87 (2008).



**CHRISTINA STOLL** currently works for the Metropolitan Library System as a Library Services Consultant. Her prior library work includes experience in another library system as well as academic, high school and public libraries. She earned her Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from Dominican University's Graduate School of Information Science in River Forest, IL. Christina was a 2006 Library Journal "Mover and Shaker," and a member of the 2001 Synergy Class.



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BY FORREST GLENN SPENCER

**R**ichard Huffine is a third-generation librarian. He relishes the legacy, along with fond early memories of climbing the stairs of an old house that

was converted into a branch library. "My mother worked in my elementary school and public library when I was growing up," he recalls. "My grandmother ran a branch library in the public library

system in the mountains of Tennessee. I didn't necessarily think about going into libraries initially."

Huffine was originally going to be a theater manager, having earned his BA in business administration with a minor in theater from Appalachian State University in 1991. "But then I started working in the college library as a work studies student of government documents. That's where I cut my teeth on the whole SuDOC [Superintendent of Documents Classification] system." It was that exposure that lead him to pursue a new career in library science and an MLIS from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, in 1995.

Today, Huffine, 39, is the national library coordinator for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Reston, Virginia. The federal agency is responsible for providing reliable scientific information on Earth sciences. There are three other main libraries connected to the Reston office: Flagstaff, Arizona; Menlo Park, California; and Denver, Colorado. For nearly two years, Huffine's job has been to coordinate the activities of the four libraries.

**Name:** Richard Huffine

**Joined SLA:** 2004

**Current Status:** National Library Coordinator for the U.S. Geological Survey

**Last Job:** Web Analytics Manager, USA.Gov

**Experience:** 12 years as a professional librarian.

**Education:** BA in Business Administration, Appalachian State University, 1991; MLIS, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 1995

**First Job:** 1986 - Summer Intern, Shenandoah Summer Music Theater, Winchester, Virginia

**First LIS Job:** 1995 - Substitute Reference Librarian, Asheville-Buncombe Library, Asheville, North Carolina

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"I oversee the allocation of funding and the direction the library system goes into," he describes. "I don't have to supervise the people in the process. The libraries are unique and distinctive in many ways. They share a library catalogue and they share an acquisitions process. I refer our researchers to their services." Huffine is responsible for the convergence of USGS's physical and digital content and services. "One of my first tasks at USGS was to write a digital library plan—essentially, where the library is and how we are going to change to accommodate the digital. That plan should be published this year. I am excited about that because in this new world I think a lot of organizations are saying, 'Isn't it all online?' And the answer is probably 'No, not yet.' Not everything is online. Even if it were, you would still need people that know how it is organized and what you need and how to present it. When we go all digital, we will have librarians involved in the process because they know how to organize that information."

It is this type of initiative and leadership skills that put Huffine in the SLA spotlight of "members to watch." This year, at the SLA annual conference in Seattle, Huffine was the recipient of the Dow Jones Leadership Award, selected by the SLA Awards and Honors Committee and presented to a member "who exemplifies leadership as a special librarian through excellence in personal and professional competencies." Huffine was selected "in recognition of the value he has brought to revolutionizing the emergence of librarians on the Internet. In his role, he has successfully understood and strategically leveraged the power of the Internet to make librarians savvy technology professionals serving a global community."

Huffine is one of those rare people: a motivator and a doer. He doesn't allow the grass to grow around his feet. His respect for the role of the information specialist inspires him to push beyond boundaries and horizons, and his vision of what is possible within the profession has become infectious



**Richard Huffine with Jane Kenney Myers at SLA 2008 in Seattle, shown here contributing to the Lubuto Library Project, a charity that is building libraries for street children in Zambia. Huffine met Myers through the DC Chapter.**

among those who know him and work with him and who call him colleague, associate, or friend.

### Advocate for Government Libraries

Inside and outside of SLA, Huffine has emerged as a chief advocate for the government librarian. That's because the federal government has been a big part of his career, which began as a contractor for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the spring of 1996 as their sole "Internet Librarian." The position blossomed into a management position in the next year, a year that became a watershed moment in the history of the Internet: the browser war between Netscape and Microsoft.

"My role for the first 18 months was maintaining the EPA home page under the direction of the EPA staff," Huffine says. "Librarians shaped that Web site in its early days—from its content to its sidebar data. An organization as complex as the EPA always struggled with its 'front door.' To be involved in the 'front door' of a major agency at that time in history was a wonderful opportunity."

Later, he became involved in the

EPA libraries budgetary cuts. He said he was shocked at the decision to close some of the EPA libraries. Huffine worked to promote the value of the libraries. "We presented the EPA with a business case that showed them a positive return on their investment for their regional libraries. We were trying to build a service of excellence in areas of specialty in different locations, and there was a budgetary push to make a dramatic cut. There were people who thought the libraries would survive the cut. Congress, SLA and other associations came together to say that those libraries provided critical information on the issues of environmental impact, climate change, etc. They made the argument that the material that is available to the public and to the researchers was extremely valuable."

Huffine, eventually, resigned in October 2005. He could not, with a clear conscience, be part of the system that was going to close the libraries. As for the EPA today, there was an earmark in the FY2008 budget that requires restoration of library services. Huffine believes that they will be small and more linked into a network of library services from the EPA. And, as government librarians are fully aware,

a tighter budget is the challenge of all federal libraries today.

Not only did Huffine leave the EPA, he took a break from being a special librarian. It was a choice that would add a new value to his skills. "I became the Web analytics manager for USA.gov, which is the major Web site for citizens looking for information from the federal government. As a librarian, I was able to take my perspective as a user of information and look at statistics and data generated from the Web site. It's more than numbers; it's what the numbers tell you."

He said it was a wonderful opportunity to tell the story of the users of USA.gov, but after a year he was missing being a librarian and working in a library. Huffine applied for another position, this one with USGS. As Huffine remembers, "They were looking for someone who can look at the digital side and the physical side of libraries and bring them together."

### Starting a New SLA Division

Huffine's first SLA conference experience was in 2003, when he traveled to New York to accept an award from Thomson Dialog. Talking with SLA

members during that event helped him decide that SLA would make a wonderful network opportunity to his career. He joined SLA in January of 2004 and soon met SLA's then new executive director, Janice Lachance, as well as past-presidents Guy St. Clair and Cynthia Hill. He arrived in Nashville for the 2004 SLA conference ready to network and learn from colleagues across the spectrum of special libraries.

"At that time, the SLA military librarians were voting in Nashville as to whether or not to change their name and include other government service librarians," Huffine recalls. "They voted against that idea. When I heard of the news I was encouraged to start a division for government librarians. Janice Lachance told me how to set up the division and the next thing I know I'm walking around the SLA conference as a full attendee, having people sign a petition to create a government information division." The Board of Directors accepted the petition and brought the SLA government information division into existence in October 2004 with Richard Huffine as its first chairperson.

Everybody in SLA pitched in and helped. "Linda Broussard was amazing as the leadership coordinator to help

me become a leader and get together our governing documents," he says. "We put together a great slate of officers." Huffine and his officers decided the government division would be a little different from other SLA divisions; they decided that they would focus on partnering with other divisions. "So much of what the business librarians use is government information," he notes. "The education division uses the ERIC [Educational Resources Information Center] database from the Department of Education. Our work is in so many other divisions that we didn't want to create our own programming initially—we wanted to partner with others. It's really blossomed and taken off." Huffine, today, serves as past chair of the division.

### Working for DC's Libraries

Huffine's activities outside of SLA and government librarianship were also recognized in his honor by the Dow Jones Leadership Award. His leadership extends into the Friends of the Library in the District of Columbia, where he currently serves as president of both the Federation of Friends of the DC Public Library and the Friends of his neighborhood branch. He has become one of the driving forces in the revitalization of DC Public Libraries, a system that has suffered horribly in its infrastructure and bureaucratic operation from during the last 15 years.

"When I got involved four years ago," Huffine explains, "the library was open 40 hours per week. Now, the public libraries are open 56 hours per week, and there's been a 33 percent increase in the DC public library budget." Huffine helped raised \$7 million for the DC libraries through direct advocacy. "We had the mayor tour our public libraries to see the shape they were in and the opportunities to renovate them. My neighborhood public library is one of four Carnegie Libraries in DC. The building was built in 1925. It's a beautiful structure. Our ward councilmember Jim Graham is a huge preservationist and a fan of the library.



Richard Huffine with members of SLA's Government Information Division in 2006. He set up the division in 2004 and became its first chairperson. From left: Valerie Allen, Peggy Garvin, Dave Martin, Eileen Deegan and Richard Huffine.



We have the most diverse area in the District; every walk of life lives within a half-mile of our library.”

## Involved in Lubuto Project

Huffine has also become involved in SLA member Jane Myers’ project in building libraries for street children in Zambia. He met Myers through the DC Chapter and started sending the Lubuto Project donations. But soon more discussions led to more direct involvement. Huffine says, “We share an understanding: it’s not just about books, it is a culture shift in empowering individuals. You can go to the library and learn something, or you can go to the library and watch a DVD or listen to music or find someone who has similar interests. She’s doing this for street children in Africa. I am hoping to do that here for the citizens in DC. While information is readily available on the Internet, there’s a role for librarians and for the library to play. We need to make it a community effort rather than an individual one.”

Huffine is currently working with the Lubuto Project on implementing a project of one laptop per child. They recently received a donation for the laptop project. Huffine and others are currently working on ways to best implement the plan, and he hopes to visit Zambia in 2009 or 2010. Huffine is a world traveler, escaping once a year to locales such as Portugal, Egypt and, this year, China.

## What Lies Ahead

As a librarian looking at 40, Huffine is excited in what lies ahead for the profession and the opportunities to explore. He continues to pursue his interest in the convergence of physical and digital libraries, and to help find solutions to the profession’s challenges.

“One of the things that is puzzling in our profession is metadata creation and cataloging. ... I’ve been looking at metadata and how it is created and managed. I value the input of cataloging librarians—their rigor and their discipline—but I’m concerned by the

future sustainability of that.” Huffine has been studying the semantic Web and semantic interoperability, or how information can be managed if it’s tagged appropriately. “I think these worlds are going to come together,” he adds. “The challenge will be how well they merge and if we have a generation of cataloging librarians’ expertise available to us by the time that happens. I do personal reading on it; I don’t believe we’ve solved the problem yet.”

As for SLA, Huffine hopes the association will become involved with enterprise content management (ECM) and records management. He believes those areas are outside the library field right now, but individuals working in those disciplines are having to relearn a lot of what the libraries and librarians know.

“As we are a group for professional development of information professionals, not just librarians, we have an opportunity to reach out and network with a whole group of people who are fighting similar battles with different types of information,” he explains. “Defining ourselves with the library world gives us clear relationships with vendors and publishers. But, as we look where organizations are struggling today, I think we need to learn more about ECM and reach out and educate those communities about what we know about managing information.”

Within SLA, Huffine will continue to work with the organization and explore professional development programs that benefit the membership. One day, he hopes he will be able to serve as a member of the Board of Directors and serve as president of the SLA DC Chapter. He also maintains an affiliation with the American Library Association

(ALA), where he currently serves as chair-elect of the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Roundtable of ALA for 2010.

“I’ve got a foot in both camps,” he admits. “Right now I’m just working to serve the needs of government librarians. I’ve been working very hard with SLA and ALA to do that. SLA will always be my home for professional development.” Part of his job with the ALA division is to form a committee on legislation and to look at the legislative issues facing federal libraries. “One of the things we are missing is any clear mandate that agencies have libraries. We as a profession need to consider how agency libraries are funded to support the needs of federal employees and of the public. We have a new administration coming to the White House in 2009, and there are opportunities to sway information policies from within, depending on what their views are,” he adds.

Richard Huffine is a long way from the North Carolina mountains where he grew up. While he is a third generation librarian, he is the first generation with this level of activity in the profession. Part of the work he explores and conducts today will affect a new generation of librarians as the continuing convergence of physical and digital libraries develop into a single symbiotic entity.

“I was so happy to tell my grandmother before she passed away that I got my masters in library science. It’s a wonderful legacy to have. Ultimately, what we do will be a good thing. We’ll be better positioned as we go digital. We are in the lead.” **SLA**

**FORREST GLENN SPENCER** is President of SpencerConnects LLC, an information service and public relations company based in the Washington, D.C., area. He can be reached at fgspencer@gmail.com.



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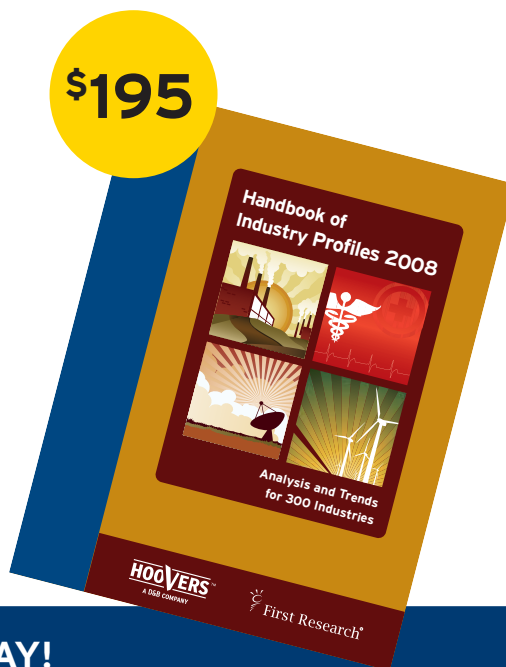
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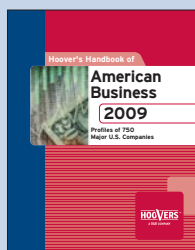
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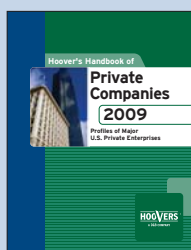
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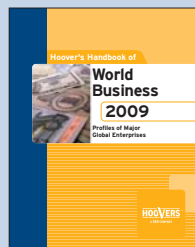
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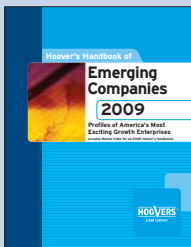
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# Looking for a Job?

## Networking at Conferences Can Open Doors

IN THESE DAYS OF SLOW ECONOMIC GROWTH, TAPPING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET THROUGH EFFECTIVE NETWORKING AT CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND MEETINGS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

BY VALERIE J. RYDER

**S**earching for a job during the current economic malaise can be quite challenging, whether you are a new graduate, re-entering the job market, looking for a job because of position elimination, or changing jobs by choice. While it is easy these days to find job postings on the Internet, that method of job hunting is a double-edged sword since the easy availability has increased the number of applicants for posted jobs.

Tapping the hidden job market through effective networking is more important than ever before. And that means attending conferences, seminars, workshops and regional meetings. These are excellent ways to explore job opportunities before they become public knowledge.

There are many creative ways to uncover career opportunities at a conference, but some take preparation in advance. When the conference program is available, review it to iden-

tify potential contacts at your target companies or organizations. Look for speakers from organizations you'd like to work for and sessions that are likely to attract people who may know of jobs in which you'd be interested. Read speaker profiles and session abstracts that are provided to uncover organizations that are working in your area of interest. Use social networking Web sites such as LinkedIn or Facebook to learn more about the potential contact and determine whether you have any colleagues in common in your network. You may want to contact the person prior to the conference to establish a channel of communication in advance. Attend the session and introduce yourself afterwards with an expression of

interest in what their organization is doing or desire to learn more about the topic. Most people like to talk about what they do or their area of expertise. Don't monopolize their time, but make a good contact and exchange business cards so you can follow up later on.

A conference can be a gold mine of opportunities for you if you keep one question in mind at all times: "Is what I am doing right now likely to provide me with a job search opportunity?" Apply this philosophy to the selection of sessions and social events you plan to attend. Suppress your natural urge to attend sessions that sound merely educational, will be attended by lots of your friends, or provide a refuge from being out there meeting people. Be less

**When the conference program is available, review it to identify potential contacts at your target companies or organizations.**





concerned that you sit through every session and more concerned that you make useful contacts.

### Visiting with Exhibitors

Even if you are not considering employment with a supplier, do visit the exhibit area and spend time talking with the exhibitors. However, be considerate of the exhibitors' prime reason for being there—selling their products or services and improving customer relations. You should visit the exhibit area when it is not busy. If a supplier is busy with customers, move on to another booth and return at a more opportune time. The exhibitors will be more apt to talk at length with you when they have slack time than when they are trying to make a sale.

When you do approach an exhibitor, be honest about your intent. Tell them that you are job hunting and what type of position you are seeking. Ask them if they know of any openings in any of their clients' organizations, and get the contact information. Also ask which of their accounts are re-organizing and downsizing—that knowledge can be useful if you are considering working for one of those companies. If you have used the exhibitor's products in the past, or hope to do so in the future, tell them that, too—you may be one of their clients when you do find a job! Most importantly, thank them for their time and assistance.

### Placement Firms

Often, industry-oriented placement firms attend or exhibit at conferences. Take advantage of this opportunity to meet with these companies during the



conference and give them several copies of your résumé. Discuss your job search strategy with them and solicit their knowledge of the job market for your specialties, interests and geographic area. Even though they may not have any recruitment assignments at the time for which you are qualified or in which you are interested, they can still provide you with useful information to increase your chances of success. Moreover, you may be able to learn what the salary range is for the type of position you are seeking for your geographic target.

Remember to contact the individuals from the placement firms you spoke with at the conference on a periodic basis afterwards. Their placement needs change frequently, and you want to ensure that they remember who you are and your qualifications.

### Business Cards and Résumés

In addition to the traditional channels for applying for posted jobs at a conference, you should market yourself. That means bringing ample supplies of your résumé and business cards when you are on the quest for career opportunities. Make sure you always have copies of your résumé and business cards with you, even when you are not officially job searching. In fact, the only time you are not job hunting at a conference is when you are sleeping (and then you might at least be dreaming about the perfect job).

Without making a pest of yourself to conference participants, take any opportunity you can to give your business card or résumé to someone who can at least pass it on to someone else in their organization who is in a position to hire. When you think it would be too presumptuous to offer your résumé, you can be effective by using your business cards. You'll be pleasantly surprised to find how helpful most people are when you don't put them on the spot to hire you or find you a job.

Offering your business card gives you the chance to request their business card in return. Then you have another contact person for the future. After you collect a number of cards in a short time, you will have trouble recalling who was



**VALERIE RYDER** has managed business and technical libraries in several corporations where she has implemented digital libraries and library systems software. During her career transitions she developed job-hunting techniques that leverage the power of information. Valerie is an independent information consultant and can be reached at [vj3ryder@ptd.net](mailto:vj3ryder@ptd.net).



# SLA 2009

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who, so be sure to write on the back of the card where and when you met this person and anything that might help you (or them) to recall your conversation. Remember to write down the names and organizations of anyone they mention before you move on to your next encounter. Always thank them for their time and effort on your behalf.

If you don't have business cards from your current organization, have some simple personal cards imprinted with your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and possibly the URL for your profile on a social networking site such as LinkedIn or Facebook. These personal cards are rather like the "calling cards" of a previous, more gracious period. You can produce your own cards with your computer printer and perforated card-stock or purchase an ample supply from a discount office supply store for about \$20 to \$30. These cards make a far more professional impression than

scribbling your contact information on a scrap of paper that later gets lost in someone's pocket.

### Career Development Sessions

If there are any career development or job hunting sessions at the conference, be sure to attend them even if you think you know what you are doing and have an excellent résumé. Not only can you learn more tips or techniques at these sessions, but you will also make useful contacts for your network. Try not to consider the other participants as competitors for available positions but as possible allies in your campaign. Unless you are both applying for the exact same job, most people will be willing to discuss their experiences. Talking with someone who is trying to leave an organization or a location you find attractive can shed some interesting light on jobs in that organization or the job market in that locale. People you

meet at these sessions may be able to tell you something about jobs that they are not interested in or what the job market is like elsewhere.

There's no easy way to find the right job, and you will have periods of frustration with the process. However, developing good networking skills is an asset worth having as a key to continued career success. A pleasant by-product of job search networking is that you will meet many interesting people, some of whom you will continue to contact as part of your new job and career. **SLA**

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

Abram, Stephen, "Getting the Most Out of Your Conference Experience." *Information Outlook*, June 2008.

Brown, Marshall, "Cast a Wide Net(work)." *Information Outlook*, May 2008.

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# Library Friends, Fast Friends

STUDIES ARE INCREASINGLY SHOWING THAT SOCIALLY ENGAGED INDIVIDUALS ARE IN BETTER MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH THAN THE SOCIALLY ISOLATED

BY ANN H. SLATTERY

**F**or all those baby boomers “refusing to age,” I have a word of advice—develop close friendships. There may be other ways, but I have found the serendipity of my friendship with Patricia to be a boon as I enter the last third of my life. We are two women, ages 60 and 61, who met at an event in Washington, DC, five years ago. How did we get there? By degrees—library degrees, that is.

We met at a lecture on books by librarian and author Nancy Pearl (*Book Lust*) held in the historic James Monroe House. Somehow left alone after the peanuts and ice cubes had vanished from the reception, we started talking and discovered we had something in common: we had both left the South, (Patricia, Tennessee; me Texas) the same year (2003) to come to Washington—Patricia to work in the 2004 Kerry-Edwards campaign and me to help my elderly mother.

That was just the beginning. As we exchanged phone numbers and e-mail addresses, we started learning more and more of the things we valued and shared. It became almost eerie that every time we talked, some other commonality would pop up: both librarians; both have graduate degrees; both lovers of books; both writers; both lovers of learning and the joy of inquisitive thinking; both lovers of languages (Patricia has studied Spanish and I have studied Italian). Did I mention that we eventually worked in the same library?

In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle presents three different kinds of friendships: those that are pleasant, useful, and perfect. The highest, most noble is the perfect friendship, which is based on the notion that each friend wishes and performs what is good for the other. But in a useful friendship, what is done for the other person is done primarily because it benefits the doer. The pleasant friendship is based primarily on

enjoyment, or what brings pleasure. We naturally like people who are amusing or just plain fun to hang out with. This kind of friendship is not demanding of our intellect but provides happy times. What teenager doesn't relate to this?

There is nothing wrong with the last two kinds of friendship, says Aristotle. But my friendship with Patricia verges on a perfect friendship, without our even striving for it. It has been a pure gift.

We found other similarities: We learned to read with Dick and Jane; our parents' wedding year was the same (1944); in the 60s, we traveled with the same Dutch touring group (all the guides were young Dutchmen who drove Volkswagen vans full of American college girls all over Europe); our fathers served in the U.S. Navy in World War II, in the South Pacific. Also, both of us took lessons for several years and studied the same music, and we are both actively involved in our respective churches—Patricia with the Episcopalian and I

with the Roman Catholic. And, yes, we even had television shows in common, not missing a beat when it comes to remembering the many shows of our youth, such as *Howdy Doody*, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Mickey Mouse Show* and so many more.

### Should Age Matter?

Back in our youth, in 1948, the British Broadcasting Corporation launched the annual "Reith Lectures" (not that we were listening then). The subject for the 2001 series was "The End of Age," given by Tom Kirkwood, professor of medicine and head of the Department of Gerontology at the University of Newcastle. He began doing research on aging in 1974 and has since published more than 160 scientific papers on human aging. In the 2001 lecture, he posed some startling questions: Why should age matter? Why can't a person's biological state "speak for itself"? In a

survey on attitudes to aging conducted in Great Britain that year, when asked, "When do you think old age begins?" 48 percent of respondents said, "The seventies." But those over 65 said, "The eighties."

Then there are the studies that show the importance of friendships and social contacts to avoid isolation and a "slow death." Developmentalists describe late middle age as a time for "generativity" (e.g., Erikson, 1982; McAdams, Aubin, and Logan, 1993), a concern that one's efforts will be valued by later generations. And generativity is not limited to one's influence on her descendents.

A 2004 study conducted among middle- and older-aged Amish, Appalachian, and Latter Day Saints women by Kathleen W. Piercy and Cheryl Cheek found that quilting led to generativity: teaching their skills to others, spending time with their grandchildren in teaching and quilting, and leaving a legacy through their quilts.

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Who represents this better than the famed Gee's Bend quilters, of Gee's Bend, Alabama? And not only have they enjoyed a strong bond of friendship, they have also profited financially from their Quilters Collective. This marketing effort provides quilters with sales of their quilts, some of which sell for more than \$20,000. And several of the younger ones in the community have inherited this dedication, even if they use a computer to make their designs.

It's not just quilters who form social bonds. In a study by Candace Ashton-Shaeffer and Alice Constant in 2005, older adults surveyed about their gardening activities said that friendship building was one of their motivations.

## Social Capital

During the golden age of ancient Athens (461-429 B.C.), citizens were engaged in the issues of the day. That is true of Patricia. She has volunteered in numerous local and national political campaigns. In fact, her business card introduces her as a "political operative." Additionally, she finds time to tutor a local elementary student in reading each week.

The importance of social capital in the "third age" of our lifespan is capturing the interest of several searchers nowadays. Theodore Roszak (1998) suggests that retirement will be redefined by new social values. Other researchers—such as Eric Jensen and Elkhonon Goldberg—are looking at the brain itself and argue that it is dynamic and malleable and that intelligence can be actually be made wiser, stronger, and more creative as we age.

As early as 1979, a study by Berkman and Syme showed that older adults with few social ties have an increased risk of dying earlier. A later report by Forster and Stoller revealed that those with a social support system actually survive longer. Carstensen (1991) reported that the socially engaged are in better mental and physical health than the socially isolated.

And do women and men differ in their use of support networks? Absolutely. The



## ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST

### CIVIC VENTURES

139 Townsend Street, Suite 505  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
415-430-0141

[www.civicventures.org](http://www.civicventures.org)

Civic Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that works to expand the contributions to society of Americans 50 years old and above.

### THE ELDERHOSTEL INSTITUTE NETWORK

11 Avenue de Lafayette  
Boston, MA 02111  
800-454-5768

[www.elderhostel.org/ein/intro.asp](http://www.elderhostel.org/ein/intro.asp)

The Elderhostel Institute Network is a voluntary association of Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs), also called Institutes for Learning in Retirement (ILRs).

### NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR CREATIVE RETIREMENT

Reuter Center, CPO #5000  
The University of North Carolina at Asheville

One University Heights  
Asheville, NC 28804  
828-251-6140

<http://www.unca.edu/ncccr/>

The North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement (NCCCR) promotes lifelong learning, leadership, and community service opportunities for retirement-aged individuals. Most programs target the Asheville area, but some are implemented in other parts of North Carolina or the nation.

### PRINCETON PROJECT 55, INC.

Center for Civic Leadership  
12 Stockton Street  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
609-921-8808

[www.project55.org/](http://www.project55.org/)

Princeton Project 55 (PP55) is a nonprofit organization established by members of the Class of 1955 at Princeton University to mobilize alumni and students and others who share their concerns to provide civic leadership from groups of college alumni.

### TEMPLE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR INTERGENERATION LEARNING

1601 North Broad Street, Room 206  
Philadelphia, PA 19122  
215-204-6970

[www.temple.edu/cil](http://www.temple.edu/cil)

The Center for Intergenerational Learning at Temple University is dedicated to strengthening communities by bringing generations together to meet the needs of individuals and families throughout the life cycle.

### VITAL AGING NETWORK, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota  
College of Continuing Education  
201 Coffey Hall  
1420 Eckles Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
(612) 626-5555

[www.van.umn.edu/](http://www.van.umn.edu/)

The Vital Aging Network is sponsored by the University of Minnesota Career and Lifework Center to provide resources for just about any issue "vital agers" (loosely defined as anyone age 55 or better) may encounter.



data show that women tend to have more extensive support and are more satisfied with their friendships (Antonucci, 1994; Field & Minkler, 1988).

Even the federal government touts the benefits of friendship. An article published by the National Mental Health Information Center is titled, "What a Difference a Friend Makes: Social Acceptance Is Key to Mental Health Recovery" (<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/SMA07-4257/default.asp>).

## Retirement Alternatives

As more baby boomers turn 60, public libraries and nonprofit organizations are beginning to offer creative alternatives to retirement. In June 2007, the annual conference of the American Library Association held a special session titled "Aging and Activism: Findings from the Latest Research on Brain Health and Psychology." In 2005, the Americans for Libraries Council and the Institute of Museum and Library Services convened a conference to examine key issues relating to aging. The aim was to foster creative ways to provide services and opportunities to active older adults (we know, that's us—baby boomers). One of its key proposals was to put public libraries front and center in mediating "the great social transformation signaled by the growing proportion of healthy, active older Americans."

Surely the programs offered by such organizations as the Elderhostel Institute Network would agree with the above assessment. Long a leader in lifelong learning, this organization is vast in its span of topics and locations calculated to interest older Americans. Each of

its Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs) tries to meet the educational interests of its communities in its own unique and independent way, but many are sponsored by a college or university. There are more than 500 LLIs in the United States and Canada, and more than 1,000 in other countries, where they are usually called Universities of the Third Age.

So what's so bad about aging? Nothing! "Age" rules. What other words share face time with leveraging, engaging, and managing? **SLA**

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# Observing Technology Changes in the Real World

This past year has been a banner year for observing some seismic shifts in our users' context, technologies and adoption phase.

BY STEPHEN ABRAM

I've long been an advocate of just observing human behavior in the real world and playing with technologies in the consumer space as a way of keeping up, understanding change and sensing the future. People often just nod, but sometimes they ask, "How?" So, I thought I'd devote this month's column to a few short examples of how and where to watch user behavior.

This past year has been a banner year for observing some seismic shifts in our users' context, technologies and adoption phase. I believe that when stuff is reaching the general public's consciousness, we're obliged to take notice. I also think we can argue that many special librarians serve a specific segment of the marketplace—wealthier, computer literate, employed, better educated, etc.—that is more likely to adopt changes. So that's *who* we're watching—everyone, but especially our target users.

So let's do some quick highlights of the *what*, *where*, *how* and *why*. (The *when* is simply anytime!)

## What?

A few events this year have provided us with some unique observation and

conversation moments. For example:

- The 2008 Beijing Olympics. Were you not amazed by the real time streaming media at these games, event by event? According to some measurements, Yahoo beat NBC and MSNBC in audience. Incredible! So, what does that tell us about the penetration of Web video and streaming into the marketplace?
- eBooks from Amazon et al. Is this the tipping point year? Probably not, but it's getting close. How do they load their books? What titles? Have they tried newsfeeds? Anything work related yet?
- The Old iPhone and New G3 iPhone. We got gifted with the launch of the G3 iPhone, and I don't think sliced bread got this much word of mouth! Now we have the first Android phone based on Google's Open Handset Alliance. Believe me, this is a crossing-the-chasm level shift for North America. So ask folks you see, what downloads are on their phone? Music? Ringtones? Check out the Apple download center and see what's there.
- The U.S. 2008 election. This election is not just engaging (and I

can't even vote in it!) but it's also fascinating from a technology point of view. When the history books are written, it's a sure bet that the role new technology played will be identified as a major factor in the outcome. I've signed on to services from both presidential candidates to follow how they use the tools for communication, fundraising, emergency spin, etc. It's fascinating.

- The recent Facebook and MySpace changes. In the past few months we've seen major design changes at the big social networking sites. You've seen what changed on your Facebook presence. Check out your "friends." What have they down-loaded? What apps are interesting to them? Check out your wall and see alerts about what's new and hot. Observing human behavior doesn't always have to be in person!
- iPod—What's on your iPod? Share your songs and artists, too. It's only intrusive if you get too insistent. What are they using—their own CDs, LimeWire, iTunes, the public library? Just music or audiobooks, MTV, CNN, movies or TV shows, too? Are they original rippers from the Napster era, when it was an underground activity, or just when did they make the switch from disc? What do their kids/parents use?

## Where?

Anywhere, really! I watch people in grocery stores as they are taking pictures of food boxes, surfing competitor prices on their iPhone, or texting the recipe to the kids and telling them to turn the oven on ("Now!"). I'd say some behaviors are changing. Seeing students take

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a photo of the OPAC record or text it to themselves rather than write a paper note is an observable shift. It's a small change that tells me something about note taking and OPAC functionality. And toy stores are a real feast. You can see toys doing things that intranets will do next year. I worry I might get kicked out of Toys R Us for staring. I doubt security will believe that I'm just doing research. Anyway, here are a few more prime spots:

- Academic Information and Knowledge Commons are neat places. Walk around and surreptitiously shoulder surf. What are users' Web site choices, gaming choices, e-mail choices, social sites, etc.? Are they multitasking, e-learning, Facebooking? How many windows are open? Are they using head-phones, thumb drives? It's hard to get students to explain what they're doing since they don't actually know what is so different. So just watch.

- When you're visiting friends, look at their homes. Check out big screen TVs, cable access, wireless connectivity, set-top boxes, satellite dishes, satellite radio, etc. Do the same thing with your friends' and acquaintances' cars. See any satellite radio, GPS systems, USB drives, Bluetooth?

I spend a lot of time on commuter trains, buses and planes and in the lounges of airports and hotels. I look around and see eBook readers, MP3 players, phones, video players, laptops, and more. It's a great place to strike up a conversation and learn. What percentages of kids, mall walkers, or seniors are on their phones while they walk? And that brings us to *how*.

### How?

First just watch, that's usually enough. When you see something worth pursuing, just ask. Friendly places like

libraries, hotels, conference centers, airport lounges and shopping lines tend to result in friendly conversations. Use your own best judgment. Appeal to their egos. (Yeah, I can stoop pretty low!) You can start with: "Ooh, you've got a Kindle (or Sony Reader, iPhone, cool MP3 player, whatever). Do you like it? Is it as cool as they say?" You get the idea. It's just reference interviewing with tricky social stuff added.

### Why?

That's the easiest question. We're a curious profession. We're maybe the most curious profession. After a few weeks of doing this, we'll be better informed than some market researchers. And then we're the "go-to" folks for technology advice as our organizations struggle with the latest bump on the tech adoption curve.

And that's where we belong. **SLA**



# U.S. Government Works: Not All in the Public Domain

**The U.S. government may be a copyright owner and may obtain copyrights through an assignment, bequest or otherwise.**

BY LESLEY ELLEN HARRIS

The U.S. *Copyright Act* clearly states that copyright protection in the United States is not available for any work of the federal government. This allows those physically present in the United States to use many U.S. government works, including pamphlets, documents, and images, without obtaining any copyright permissions or paying any copyright fees. These non-protected works are those created by a federal government employee as part of that employee's official duties. This excludes contractors and certain people who work with the U.S. government but who are not considered government employees for copyright purposes.

## Not All Works Are Available

Not all government works are freely available for use by the public. In some situations, the U.S. government does own copyright in works. The U.S. government may be a copyright owner and may obtain copyrights through an assignment, bequest or otherwise. For example, a work created by an independent contractor such as a consultant, writer or artist, may be assigned to the U.S. government. When a copy-

right is transferred or assigned to the U.S. government, the government then is a copyright owner.

Also, the fact that U.S. government works are not protected by copyright law does not create a requirement that these works be made publicly available without restriction. Federal laws and agency policies govern the public release of U.S. government information. Although the government does not generally restrict the use or distribution of most types of U.S. government works, statutes such as the *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) provide the government with authority to restrict access for such purposes as national security, export control, and files relating to personnel, medical and similar issues.

## Works of Joint Authorship

If a government employee and independent consultant jointly create a work, there is an issue as to whether the government may be a co-owner of the copyright in that work with the contractor. In such a situation, it is best that the government obtain permission from the contractor to use and distribute the work.

There are situations where federal government employees have and retain copyright protection in their works. For example, an employee who writes a novel in the evenings at home would own the copyright in that novel. An employee who develops a course based on knowledge attained at work would also likely own copyright in that course, unless the development of that course were part of the employee's work duties in the federal government.

The duties of an employee may be set out in a job description and may help determine the ownership of work done that is related to one's day job. If you are a government employee and pursuing interests beyond your day job, you might consider entering into a simple agreement with your employer, stating something to the effect that you are creating work outside your job description and that you are the owner of copyright in that work.

## Outside the U.S.

Outside the U.S., the protection of U.S. government works is dependent upon the laws of that country. This is due to national treatment in the international copyright treaties, which means that you apply the law where the work is being used. Thus, if a U.S. government document is being photocopied in Canada or Italy, you apply the copyright laws of Canada or Italy. This means that in some situations, an unprotected work in the U.S. will be protected in another country. It also means that a U.S. government department may be approached for copyright clearance in a work that may be freely available in the U.S. but may be protected by copyright in another country. **SLA**

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# 2008-09 Information Outlook EDITORIAL CALENDAR



SLA is always looking for new authors for Information Outlook.

ISSUE MONTH	TOPICS	DEADLINE
Oct. 08	THE WORKPLACE	27 Aug. 2008
Nov. 08	GLOBAL ISSUES	26 Sep. 2008
Dec. 08	LEADERSHIP/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	27 Oct. 2008
Jan. 09	BUYER'S GUIDE / HOT NEW PRODUCTS	24 Nov. 2008
Feb. 09	THE SLA CENTENNIAL	22 Dec. 2008
Mar. 09	THE FUTURE OF THE INFO PROFESSIONAL	25 Jan. 2009
Apr. 09	SLA 2009 PREVIEW	21 Feb. 2009
May 09	TECHNOLOGY/WEB 2.0	25 Mar. 2009
Jun. 09	SLA 2009	22 Apr. 2009
Jul. 09	LEGAL ISSUES	27 May 2009
Aug. 09	SLA 2009 WRAP-UP	24 Jun. 2009
Sep. 09	NON TRADITIONAL LIBRARIAN	22 Jul. 2009

The editorial calendar is only a starting point. We need more articles on more topics than are listed above. We want to hear all of your ideas.

For information on writing for Information Outlook and how to submit an article, visit [www.sla.org/WriteforIO](http://www.sla.org/WriteforIO) or contact Max Buseti at [mbuseti@sla.org](mailto:mbuseti@sla.org).



# Learn to Embrace Opposition for Improved Decision Making

Opposition usually occurs when there are clearly divergent thoughts on a proposed action or idea that may be worth investigating.

BY DEBBIE SCHACHTER

To some managers, opposition or conflict may be a source of stress, and may even be considered destructive to the workplace environment. But, as I mentioned in a previous column on developing well functioning teams, conflict may naturally arise when individuals with diverse backgrounds want to challenge ideas to create better results.

A self-confident manager knows that she or he does not have all the answers, and should be prepared to encourage staff members to express their ideas when asked for input, or to make suggestions. Managers and supervisors need to rely on the information center staffers, who are usually doing the front-line work, to help inform decisions on improving operations or efficiency, where training and development may be lacking, to help integrate new systems, and more.

An inexperienced manager, however, may resist staff input, and may believe that he/she needs to show leadership through independent decision making and decisiveness. The staff quickly learns that its input is not desired with these types of managers and may cease to make an effort with their ideas and problem solving skills. The professionalism of most information center staff will ensure that disaster will not be allowed to unfold, but employees will not buy into decisions or help you to implement them as readily when they see that major decisions are routinely made without incorporating their expertise or input. As Lauren Keller Johnson clearly states: "Conflicts over ideas are good.... The higher the stakes in a key decision, the more

vital it is to stimulate this healthy kind of conflict." Battles over ideas "lead to creativity, innovation, and positive change by squeezing the best ideas from each participant's mind."<sup>1</sup>

Conversely, a manager's job is also to implement decisions that originate further up in the organization, whether they have been informed by staff input or not. Frequently, managers are called upon to implement potentially unpopular decisions that have been developed by senior executives, the Board of Directors, or other decision makers. Opposition to these types of externally implemented decisions is common, but the information center manager can reduce potential opposition by taking the opportunity to discuss the decision with staff and seeking as much input as possible.

## Opposition vs. Conflict

Opposition is not the same as conflict, although the two may occur in the same work environment. As a supervisor or manager you need to be aware that conflict can occur at many levels. It may be personal or situational. It can occur between individuals and teams. Opposition to ideas or proposed

actions may occur but does not necessarily lead to conflict. Both, however, are part of the acknowledged way to achieve better results—challenging ideas and actions can lead to better decision making. At the very least, being open to opposition or challenges to ideas and allowing discussion of proposed ideas, leads to a better understanding of the reasons why the proposed actions are being implemented.

Don't expect that your staff will always be in agreement. The workplace also does not run as a democracy, and the reality is that the manager must ultimately take ownership of the information center decisions. (Staff may feel that you are abrogating your responsibility otherwise.) In particular, when difficult decisions need to be made, staff usually wants you, the manager, to be responsible for the final decision. Providing your staff with the opportunity to provide their input, however, should reduce opposition to the final decision, and frequently brings about a better solution.

Opposition also has an important role to play with the ongoing concern for ethics in the business environment. By developing a workplace that values the many facets of opposition and healthy conflict, you will produce an environment that embraces a higher level of ethical behavior, and one where creativity and diverse thoughts are valued.

Conflict and opposition also have a link to innovation, which is one of the reasons why diverse individuals are often brought together to help develop new products or services. Too much opposition, of course, leads to negative

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results. The awareness of potential and real conflict, and developing the means to help individuals and teams listen to and incorporate divergent thoughts, are all part of conflict management. Your role as manager, supervisor or team lead also means that you also need to know when to use your position to impose a solution or resolution when a conflict cannot reach a resolution.

Greg Swartz and Julie K. Thorpe include working with opposition in their book *Leadership Lessons: 10 Keys to Success in Life and Business*. Their advice is to “assume that opposers have legitimate reasons for their positions and their interests. They suggest:

- Finding the minimum terms that each opposer will accept.
- Finding a common need or want.
- Negotiating a win-win plan if you can.
- Thinking of alternatives if you can't get a settlement.<sup>2</sup>

decisions, and opposition is seen as a negative force against effective decision making. The truth is quite the opposite. Opposition usually occurs when there are clearly divergent thoughts on a proposed action or idea that may be worth investigating. If possible, embrace opposition. If there is a lot of opposition, perhaps there are some very good reasons for considering options or hearing other points of view that you, the manager, hadn't considered.

Don't be afraid to argue your point of view. If you have information to convey, do so. It may turn the opposition around to your perspective, or at least allow those in opposition to consider your viewpoint. Using negotiation skills to come to a resolution that will be agreeable to both sides is the best possible result for dealing with opposition. And negotiation often does take time.

Most importantly, don't try to avoid conflict. Ignoring it won't make it go away; it may just go underground. You

also run the risk of losing the respect of your staff when you do not consider their concerns or viewpoint. Learn to develop your communication, negotiation and leadership skills through seeking out opposition when it occurs and incorporating this energy into your decision making. **SLA**

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Lauren Keller Johnson, “How to Encourage Healthy Conflict,” Harvard Management Update. 13(8), August 2008, p3.

<sup>2</sup> Greg Swartz and Julie K. Thorpe. *Leadership Lessons: 10 Keys to Success in Life and Business*, ASTD, 2008, Key 8.

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# Forget Invention: Innovation Is What Counts Now

**When your organization is entering its annual goals and objectives or strategic plan preparation process, use this time as an opportunity to coordinate innovation.**

BY JOHN R. LATHAM

One thing that I have learned over the years is that modesty is not one of my virtues, but I have learned that if you are going to blow your own trumpet, don't do it in print. It will always come back to bite you. The corollary to this is that you can admit your failings in print as long as they are printable. I freely admit that I am not an inventor. I dropped all science subjects at school at the tender age of 14. Thusly, I shall not be inventing a new product or service that is going to revolutionize the information industry. So what? Invention is not the same as innovation, and innovation is what counts now in the information profession.

We have moved on from change being the industry buzz word to innovation. In the famous words of Sellars and Yeatman in *1066 and All That*, this is a Good Thing. Change can mean going back to old habits, but innovation means going forwards. And who is best positioned to set innovation in motion? You have guessed it: *we are*, together with our good buddies from IT. When your organization is entering its annual goals and objectives or strategic plan preparation process, use this time as an opportunity to coordinate innovation. We are all inundated with reasons why Web 2.0 is going to improve communication and make us more competitive, but most of our fellow workers have difficulty understanding how and why. At the beginning of the budget or goals and objectives preparation process, meet with as many program areas or departments as possible to discuss the latest technology and Web 2.0

tools. It is much easier to explain how these new tools can benefit your co-workers on a one-on-one basis. Apart from anything else, it allows them to ask what they think might be dumb questions, which they would not do in open session. I freely admit that it is not obvious how these tools can bring benefits in a work environment.

You should follow up these meetings with a joint meeting to brainstorm how the new tools can be used to everyone's best advantage. You will be surprised, or perhaps not, by how little one department knows about what other departments really do and what they are trying to achieve. If everyone begins to understand how each area fits into the whole, there is a much better chance that innovative ideas will be spawned to the mutual benefit of all and the organization as a whole. After your discussions with each department individually, you can act as a moderator to guide the members of the group to discuss how the ideas on the table could help the group as a whole. Don't forget to include your colleagues from IT in the meeting. Apart from answering the technical questions, they can deal with the naysayer who moans that these ideas are all well and good, but

IT won't allow it.

It certainly works for me, so come to the table with examples of how these new technologies have worked and created benefits somewhere within the organization. Getting the best out of Web 2.0 often requires small steps first before being adopted by a wider audience.

A word of caution: innovation does not just happen. It requires the investment of time, money and nurturing. Success may well depend on a grass-roots effort but you will need to find an ally from senior management to get support and help lobby for funds. Realize the importance of IT in the process. Your current IT systems may not allow certain software or may require new servers or other hardware. Don't panic at the first obstacle. The road to successful innovation never runs smooth. Identify the saboteurs at the outset, and take time to check on their progress regularly so you can nip any teething problems in the bud. The saboteurs cannot wait to tell everyone how this whole new idea is the disaster they anticipated. Don't do it just because of the hype. It must be done for the right reasons.

When these innovations begin to work, you can say that you have invented a new and productive collaboration within the organization. Collaboration is not new, so it's really not an invention, but it might be the equivalent to bringing down the Berlin Wall for your organization. Your senior management can wax as much as it likes about departmental collaboration, but it is achieved at the grassroots level of the organization. Take the chance to shine by being the catalyst for collaboration and innovation.

Good luck. **SLA**



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For information on these and other Click University courses and seminars—including new classes on copyright—see [www.clickuniversity.com](http://www.clickuniversity.com).

## OTHER EVENTS

### OCTOBER

1-4  
**National Diversity in Libraries Conference**  
Louisville, KY, USA  
[www.kylibasn.org/ndlc201.cfm](http://www.kylibasn.org/ndlc201.cfm)

1-4  
**Access 2008**  
McMaster University, Mohawk College, and Hamilton Public Library  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
<http://access2008.mcmaster.ca>

16-17  
**Internet Librarian International**  
Information Today, Inc.  
London, UK  
[www.internet-librarian.com/index.shtml](http://www.internet-librarian.com/index.shtml)

16-19  
**LITA National Forum**  
Library and Information Technology Association  
Cincinnati, OH, USA  
[www.ala.org/ala/lita/litaevents/litaforum2008/litaforum2008.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/lita/litaevents/litaforum2008/litaforum2008.cfm)

20-22  
**Internet Librarian 2008**  
Information Today, Inc.  
Monterey, CA, USA  
[www.infotoday.com/il2008](http://www.infotoday.com/il2008)

20-22  
**Shanghai International Library Forum**  
Shanghai Library and Institute of Scientific & Technical Information  
Shanghai, China  
[www.libnet.sh.cn/silf2008/english/english](http://www.libnet.sh.cn/silf2008/english/english)

20-22  
**SCIP European Summit 2008**  
SCIP ITALIA  
Rome, Italy  
[www.scip.org/NewsRoom/PRDetail](http://www.scip.org/NewsRoom/PRDetail)

20-23  
**ARMA International Annual Conference and Expo**  
Las Vegas, NV, USA  
[www.arma.org/conference/2008/index.cfm](http://www.arma.org/conference/2008/index.cfm)

23-24  
**5th International Conference on Knowledge Management**  
ICKM Council  
Columbus, OH, USA  
[www.ickm2008.org/](http://www.ickm2008.org/)

24-29  
**ASIS&T Annual Meeting**  
Columbus, OH, USA  
[www.asis.org/Conferences/AM08/am08cfp.html](http://www.asis.org/Conferences/AM08/am08cfp.html)

25-26  
**6th International Conference on the Book**  
Common Ground and Catholic University of America  
Washington, DC, USA  
[www.b08.cgpublisher.com/](http://www.b08.cgpublisher.com/)

26-30  
**7th International Semantic Web Conference**  
Semantic Web Science Association  
Karlsruhe, Germany  
[www.iswc2008.semanticweb.org/?page\\_id=21](http://www.iswc2008.semanticweb.org/?page_id=21)

28-31  
**EDUCAUSE 2008 Annual Conference**  
Orlando, FL, USA  
[www.net.educause.edu/e08](http://www.net.educause.edu/e08)

29-3 Oct.  
**16th Int'l Conf. on Knowledge Engineering & Knowledge Mgt.**  
Acitrezza, Italy  
[www.ekaw2008.inrialpes.fr/](http://www.ekaw2008.inrialpes.fr/)

### NOVEMBER

7  
**8th Annual Brick and Click Libraries**  
Owens Library, Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO, USA  
[www.nwmissouri.edu/library/brickandclick/index.html](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/library/brickandclick/index.html)

2-5  
**LIANZA Conference 2008**  
Library and Information Association of New Zealand  
Auckland, New Zealand  
[www.lianza.org.nz/events/conference2008/index.html](http://www.lianza.org.nz/events/conference2008/index.html)

26-28  
**International Conference of Asian Special Libraries**  
SLA Asian Chapter  
New Delhi, India  
<http://units.sla.org/chapter/cas/icoasl2008.html>

### DECEMBER

2-4  
**Online Information 2008**  
London, UK  
[www.online-information.co.uk/index.html](http://www.online-information.co.uk/index.html)

2-5  
**11th Int'l Conference on Asia-Pacific Digital Libraries (ICADL)**  
Bali, Indonesia  
[www.icadl2008.org/](http://www.icadl2008.org/)

9-10  
**Persistence of Memory: Sustaining Digital Collections**  
Northeast Document Conservation Center  
Chicago, IL, USA  
[www.nedcc.org/education/conferences/pom2008/pombroc.php](http://www.nedcc.org/education/conferences/pom2008/pombroc.php)

### FEBRUARY

9-12  
**Electronic Resources & Libraries**  
UCLA  
Los Angeles, CA, USA  
[www.electroniclibrarian.org/ocs/index.php/erl/2009](http://www.electroniclibrarian.org/ocs/index.php/erl/2009)

## 14 - 17 JUNE 2009

**SLA Annual Conference**  
Washington, DC, USA  
[www.sla.org](http://www.sla.org)

### MARCH

30-1 Apr.  
**Computers in Libraries**  
Information Today  
Arlington, VA, USA  
[www.infotoday.com/cil2009/default.shtml](http://www.infotoday.com/cil2009/default.shtml)

### APRIL

6-8  
**General Online Research 09**  
German Society for Online Research  
Vienna, Austria  
[www.gor.de/gor09/index\\_en.php](http://www.gor.de/gor09/index_en.php)

8-11  
**PCA/ACA 2009 National Conference**  
Popular Culture Association & American Culture Association  
New Orleans, LA, USA  
[www.pcaaca.org/conference/national.php](http://www.pcaaca.org/conference/national.php)

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## FEATURING...

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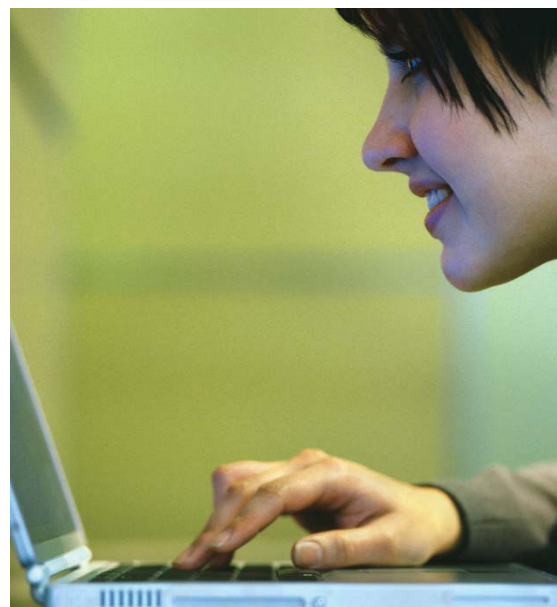
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